

Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex

The Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex consists of eight federal wildlife refuges: Atchafalaya, Bayou Sauvage, Bayou Teche, Big Branch Marsh, Bogue Chitto, Breton, Delta, and Mandalay. Each of these national wildlife refuges was created to protect, and provide habitat for a great diversity of wildlife, fish and plants. These refuges are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is a national network of 560 refuges throughout all 50 states and U.S. territories, which are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the Department of the Interior.

Atchafalaya NWR

Established: 1984

Acres: 15,000

This refuge is part of the largest bottomland hardwood swamp in the United States, the Atchafalaya Basin. The Basin is an immense natural floodplain of the Atchafalaya River. This wetland ecosystem is important for a multitude of species including migratory birds.

Management Goals:

To improve plant communities for endangered, threatened and declining wildlife as well as for waterfowl and other migratory birds. Wildlife is also managed through public hunts and in cooperation with partners.

Bayou Sauvage NWR

Established: 1990

Acres: 22,000

The refuge consists of freshwater and brackish marsh within the city limits of New Orleans. It is the nation's largest urban refuge. An enormous wading bird rookery can be found in the refuge from May through July, while tens of thousands of waterfowl wintering in its bountiful marshes.

Management Goals:

To enhance the populations of migratory, shore, and wading birds; protect endangered and threatened species; protect archeological resources; provide for scientific research and environmental education with an emphasis on wetlands; and, to provide opportunities for fish and wildlife recreation.

Bayou Teche NWR

Established: 2001

Acres: 9,000

The refuge is rich in bottomland hardwoods and cypress-gum forests. The surrounding area includes oil and gas wells and canals.

Management Goals:

The refuge is managed to provide habitat and refuge for the threatened Louisiana black bear and to promote research and restoration of the bear; provide the highest quality habitat possible for migratory birds; provide environmental education and interpretation; and, allow for compatible public use activities.

Big Branch Marsh NWR

Established: 1994

Acres: 18,000

The refuge habitat consists of pine flatwoods, oak ridges, and fresh, brackish, and saltwater marsh. The diverse habitat of this refuge is a wonderful example of the natural coastline of Lake Pontchartrain, surrounded by rapidly developing human communities.

Management Goals:

The refuge is managed for the preservation, enhancement, and restoration of the valuable wetland and pine flatwood ecosystems.

Bogue Chitto NWR

Established: 1980

Acres: 36,000

This refuge is part of the Pearl River Basin, one of the least disturbed swamplands in the U.S.. This refuge extends between Louisiana and Mississippi. Bogue Chitto means “Large Stream” in Choctaw, the Native Americans who are the original inhabitants of the Pearl Basin.

Management Goals:

To preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, manage for endangered species, and provide environmental education and compatible recreation opportunities.

Breton NWR

Established: 1904

Acres: 13,000

This is the second oldest refuge in the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt heard about the destruction of birds and their eggs on Chandeleur and Breton Islands in 1904 and soon afterwards created Breton NWR. Roosevelt visited Breton Island in June 1915, the only national wildlife refuge he ever visited.

Management Goals:

To provide sanctuary for nesting and wintering seabirds; protect and preserve the wilderness character of the islands; and, provide sandy beach habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

Delta NWR

Established: 1935

Acres: 49,000

Its 49,000 acres were formed by the deposition of sediment carried by the Mississippi River. This area combines the warmth of the Gulf and the natural wealth of the river. Its lush vegetation is the food source for a multitude of fish, waterfowl and animals. Delta is the winter home for hundreds of thousands of snow geese, coots and ducks.

Management Goals:

Waterfowl habitat management, marsh restoration and management, and oversight of oil and gas development and production.

Mandalay NWR

Established: 1996

Acres: 4,400

The refuge has a beautiful freshwater marsh with ponds, man-made levees, and canals. Oil and gas wells, and the Gulf-Intercoastal Waterway are other important man-made features in the area.

Management Goals:

The management goals are to provide the highest quality migratory bird habitat, provide for the needs of endangered plants and animals, allow compatible public uses, promote research and restoration of wetland resources and provide opportunities for environmental education and interpretation.

To learn more about the Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex and the eight refuges in the complex visit:
<http://www.fws.gov/southeastlouisiana/index.html>